

# The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804

An Exhibition at the John Carter Brown Library  
(May to September 2004)





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Charles-Yves Cousin D'Avallon, *Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture* (Paris, 1802).  
Shown here is the first published portrait of Toussaint Louverture. Although printed during his lifetime, it was probably not drawn from life.

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*Prepared by*

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This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Lara J. Moore, Ph.D., history librarian at Princeton University from 2001-2003 and a sparkling historian of libraries and archives.

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## The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804

"The failure of post-revolutionary thought to remember the revolutionary spirit and to understand it conceptually was preceded by the failure of the revolution to provide it with a lasting institution." – Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963)

TWO HUNDRED YEARS after Haitian independence was declared on January 1, 1804, it may be more difficult than ever to remember the revolutionary spirit that fueled the world's only successful slave revolt. The Haitian Revolution (1789-1804) was an event of world-historical proportions, but it remains the least understood of the three great democratic revolutions that transformed the Atlantic world in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This bicentennial year provides an extraordinary opportunity to enrich our memory of what Hannah Arendt, in her comparative study of the American and French revolutions, called "the revolutionary tradition and its lost treasure."

In the Haitian case, even more so than in the American and French cases, much of that treasure is necessarily lost forever. Few sources survive that record the thoughts and sentiments of the tens of thousands of illiterate slaves who brought about the Haitian Revolution. But some of that treasure, something of the Haitian revolutionary spirit – its stirring promise, and also its tragic disappointments – is still preserved in the books, pamphlets, maps, and prints displayed in this exhibition. In many instances the revolutionary spirit can be only dimly perceived through the eye-witness accounts and recollections of literate white colonists and free people of color, but it is there all the same.

The exhibition items have been chosen, and the captions written, to provide a running narrative of the Haitian Revolution. The major turning points of the Revolution, its key personalities, as well as its most significant themes and problems, are all explained at the particular moment in which they appear in the narrative.





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## *Part 1: Saint-Domingue before the Revolution*

### 1. *Le Code Noir ou édit du Roy* (Paris, 1735).

The infamous Code Noir served as the basis of the law of slavery in Saint-Domingue and the other French plantation colonies. It was promulgated by Louis XIV in 1685 at the initiative of his recently deceased chief minister, Colbert, and reflected a combination of Roman law principles and French Caribbean legal customs. Despite sanctioning a rigorously punitive scheme for the discipline of slave labor, the Code Noir legalized manumission and prohibited the torture and mutilation of slaves by other than royal authority. It also granted freed persons the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by whites. Predictably, these protections fell afoul of the planters and their representatives.

### 2. *De par le Roi Règlement de police du 19 Juin 1772* (Port-au-Prince, 1772).

This administrative regulation from June 1772 is typical of the concerns that motivated planters and administrators in Saint-Domingue throughout the eighteenth century, but especially in the period after the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. Stressing the need to restore "good order" and "a wise administration" after a time of "misfortune" in Port-au-Prince, the colony's second largest city and administrative capital, the regulation prohibited slaves from bearing arms and assembling in groups. It also barred slaves from selling sugar cane, and free people of color and blacks from engaging in the nighttime dances known as *Kalendas*.

### 3. Antoine François Térance O'Connor, "Journal du siege de Savannah, Septembre et Octobre 1779, avec des observations de M. le Comte d'Estaing" [Paris, 1780 or later]. MS.

The effects of the American Revolution were felt in both direct and indirect, obvious and subtle ways in the Atlantic world of the late eighteenth century. A now celebrated contingent of several hundred free mulatto and black soldiers from Saint-Domingue (the exact number is disputed) participated in the American war of independence. This journal, kept by one O'Connor, records the sizes of the various "European" forces that aided in the American siege of British troops at Savannah, Georgia, in the fall of 1779. Free people of color were often recruited to serve in the colonial militias that chased down fugitive slaves in Saint-Domingue. In that role they were called "*chasseurs*." This contingent of, it is said, 545 "*chasseurs volontaires*" (by O'Connor's count) came to Georgia as part of a larger French force commanded by General d'Estaing. It included the future mulatto revolutionaries Jean-Baptiste Chavanne and André Rigaud.

4. Abbé Guillaume Thomas Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux indes* (La Haye, 1774).

One of the few examples of antislavery sentiment in the pre-revolutionary French Atlantic world, the *Histoire philosophique* was also one of the great tracts of the Enlightenment, a mammoth multi-volume compilation of writings about European colonization whose authors included such luminaries as Diderot, Holbach, and Pechméja in addition to Raynal. In one of the *Histoire's* more memorable passages, Raynal prophesied, twenty years before the event, the rise of a black Spartacus in the Caribbean – “Où est-il, ce Spartacus nouveau?” – modeled on the great leader of a slave revolt in ancient Roman times. A perhaps apocryphal story has it that Toussaint Louverture later drew inspiration from this passage.

5. Michel René Hilliard-d'Auberteuil, *Essais historiques et politiques sur les Anglo-Américains* (Bruxelles, 1781).

One of the earliest histories of the American Revolution was by Michel René Hilliard-d'Auberteuil, a colonial lawyer living in Saint-Domingue and a radical critic of the colonial administration in the 1770s. Because of his diatribes, Hilliard d'Auberteuil was sent into exile and eventually found his way to the North American colonies, then in the middle of war against Britain. D'Auberteuil's account of the revolutionary war did not draw any direct parallels to the situation of French colonists in the Caribbean, but it did contribute to the heightened awareness of the American Revolution and to the sense of revolutionary possibility that characterized Atlantic politics during the 1780s. The frontispiece to vol. 1 of this work displays the inaugural meeting of the Continental Congress in 1774.

6. *Ordonnance du Roi, concernant les Procureurs et Economes-gérans des habitations situées aux Isles sous le Vent, du 17 Décembre 1784* (Paris, 1785).

This royal ordinance came at the end of decades of pragmatic concern that the “abuses introduced into the management of plantations located in Saint-Domingue” risked triggering a slave revolt of irreversible proportions. The new law prohibited the “inhumane” treatment of slaves by plantation managers and overseers, whether in the form of mutilation, the application of more than fifty lashes with a whip, or other methods likely to cause “different kinds of death.” The 1784 ordinance unleashed a torrent of criticism from the planters of Saint-Domingue, and the colony's high courts refused to apply it until it was watered down.

7. Abbé Guillaume Thomas Raynal [or Pierre Victor Malouet], *Essai sur l'Administration de Saint-Domingue* (Geneva?, 1785).

The problem of “domestic authority” in Saint-Domingue and the looming threat of a slave uprising continued to trouble administrators until the very beginning of the French and Haitian revolutions. In 1785, Pierre Victor Malouet, a former colonial administrator in Saint-Domingue and himself a plantation owner, published an essay on the administration of Saint-Domingue that



## PART 1: SAINT-DOMINGUE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

emphasized the presence of "two governments" in the colony: one at the level of public authority, and the other at the level of private, planter authority. He underlined the "long-term" prospect of a "reversal" in the colony if greater attention was not paid to the tendency toward anarchic despotism on the plantations. Though Malouet is believed to have written this pamphlet, it was published in Raynal's name and may reflect and incorporate some of Raynal's ideas.

8. Jacques-François Dutrône de Couture, *Précis sur la canne et sur les moyens d'en extraire le sel essentiel* (Paris, 1790).

Given the importance of sugar plantations to the French colonial economy, there was much at stake in the development of more efficient methods of extracting sugar from the cane harvested by slaves. In 1790, Jacques-François Dutrône de Couture, a chemist and affiliate of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Cap Français, offered a set of reflections on this theme in a volume based on his experience over several years visiting plantations in Saint-Domingue. Couture claimed to have discovered how to produce 100-percent molasses-free sugar, which could be more easily preserved and shipped across long distances than the existing form. One illustration in the work particularly reflects the attention given to studying and perfecting the techniques of sugar cane processing.

9. Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797)

The mixing of races in Saint-Domingue occasioned a plethora of commentaries, mostly venomous and polemical, on the causes and consequences of the colony's multiracial order. The most famous of these commentaries, though not the most polemical, was by Moreau de Saint-Méry, the colonial jurist and historian whose writings on Saint-Domingue are still a major resource for contemporary scholars. In volume one of his *Description*, Moreau counted and categorized no less than 128 racial combinations in the colony. The "science" of skin color received one of its earliest formulations in this work, completed in 1789. Moreau was himself the father of a mixed-race child by his mulatto mistress.

10. P. J. Laborie, *The coffee planter of Saint Domingo* (London, 1798)

The hills that rose above the plains of Saint-Domingue provided convenient sites for the layered terraces on which coffee beans could be grown. A significant number of the colony's coffee plantations were owned and managed by people of color. Coffee's importance to the French colonial economy grew dramatically in the period after the Seven Years War (1754-63). In this book published in 1798, as the British occupation of the western and southern provinces of Saint-Domingue was coming to an end, a white coffee planter named P. J. Laborie offered to share his expertise for the benefit of his British counterparts in Jamaica. The plate shown here illustrates how colonial coffee growers took advantage of the mountainous terrain that was unsuited for sugar cultivation.

## *Part 2: The French Revolution and the Free People of Color (1789-1791)*

1. "Lettre à Messieurs les Notables" (4 Nov. 1788), in *Premier recueil de pièces intéressantes* (Paris, 1788).

The convocation of the Estates General in 1788 and 1789 opened the door to revolution not only in France but also, eventually, in Haiti as well. Like their metropolitan counterparts, the colonists (through their representatives) were eager to present their grievances to the king and nation, represented by the three estates of clergy, nobility, and all others (the "Third Estate"). In this letter to the so-called Assembly of Notables, a gathering of the first two estates only that met in the fall of 1788, the commissioners of Saint-Domingue insisted on the colony's right to representation in the upcoming "assembly" of "the great family" that was France. However, the king's formal convocation of the Estates in August 1788 had made no provision for colonial representatives to attend.

2. Nicolas Robert, marquis de Cocherel, *Motion de M. de Cocherel, Député de S. Domingue, à la séance du ... 29 Août 1789* (Paris, 1789).

In the spring of 1789, as France was suffering from drought and poor grain harvests, the governor of Saint-Domingue (Du Chilleau) authorized the importation of foreign (i.e., U.S.) flour. This decision violated the mercantilist policy known as the *Exclusif*, which required Saint-Domingue to obtain food supplies solely from the mother country. The *Exclusif* had been relaxed in 1784, in recognition of the reality that the United States and Saint-Domingue had become major trading partners. But Du Chilleau's decision was still seen as a violation of royal law, and it led to his recall by the French Naval Minister. Here the Marquis de Cocherel (1745-1826), a deputy to the French National Assembly from the western province of Saint-Domingue, defended Du Chilleau with reference to the famine "now devastating" the colony.

3. *Cahier, contenant les Plaintes, Doléances, et Réclamations des Citoyens-Libres et Propriétaires de Couleur, des Isles et Colonies Françaises* (Paris, 1789).

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen was approved by the National Assembly on August 26, 1789. Its Article 1 famously declared that "all men are born free and equal." Nothing was said in the document itself about whether its terms would apply to the French colonies. The same month in which the Declaration was promulgated, representatives of the white planters and the *gens de couleur* of Saint-Domingue residing in Paris formed separate political clubs to advocate for their respective interests. In this pamphlet, the self-described "property-owning" mulatto representatives argued that the Declaration's terms should apply to people of color as well as to whites. They also invoked the Code Noir provisions granting equal rights of citizenship to freed persons.



## PART 2: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR (1789-1791)

### 4. *Observations sur un pamphlet ayant pour titre: Réclamation des nègres libres, colons Américains* (Paris, 1789?).

The claims of the free people of color in 1789 were met not only by the predictable resistance and rejectionism of the white planter representatives, but also by parallel demands from the free black representatives. In another 1789 pamphlet published just before this one, the free blacks (calling themselves "American colonists") criticized the mulattos for being of "mixed blood," in contrast to their own state of "pure blood." Indeed, there is reason to wonder whether this rhetoric may not have issued from the pen of an ally of the white planters in Paris. Here, an anonymous representative of the free people of color defends against the charge of racial impurity.

### 5. *Société des Amis des Noirs, Adresse à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'abolition de la traite des noirs* (Paris, Feb. 1790).

Abolitionist thought in France made inroads during the Enlightenment, but it was not until the beginning of the French Revolution that the antislavery position found institutional expression and began to have an impact on colonial policy. The Société des Amis des Noirs (Society of Friends of the Blacks) was created in Paris in February 1788, modeled on the London society of the same name and presided over by Brissot de Warville. Initially the Society advocated only an end to the slave trade, not to plantation slavery itself in the New World, as in the case of this address to the National Assembly in February 1790, made while deliberations over the French constitution were under way.

### 6. *Rapport fait à l'Assemblée Nationale, le 8 mars 1790, au nom du Comité des colonies, par M. Barnave* (Paris, 1790).

The relationship between the French constitution and the maintenance of racial hierarchy and slavery in the Caribbean colonies provided the context for a vigorous debate in the National Assembly in Paris in March 1790. As chairman of the Assembly's Colonial Committee, Antoine Barnave (1761-1793), a lawyer from Grenoble and one of the most prominent orators of the early part of the French Revolution, defended the importance of protecting the slave trade and plantation slavery in the Caribbean. These were matters that, according to his reasoning, belonged to the colonies' "internal regime." His report provided the basis for the March 8 decree of the National Assembly authorizing the election of colonial assemblies in Saint-Domingue. Barnave deliberately neglected to specify whether free people of color would be allowed to vote alongside whites in these local elections.

### 7. *Affiches Américaines* (March 11, 1790)

The French Revolution arrived in a Saint-Domingue where life was going forward much as it always had: with slaves running away from the brutalities of life on the plantations, planters hoping to reclaim their property with the aid of the colonial militias, and

administrators worrying about how to keep everything under control. This edition of the *Affiches Américaines*, one of only two newspapers published in Saint-Domingue under the Ancien Régime, featured a typical report (in the left column) about the fugitive slaves captured and brought to the colony's various jails. Less typically, it also announced (in the right column) the arrival in Cap Français of a musical pantomime commemorating the storming of the Bastille in July 1789, an event that has done "so much honor to the Nation."

8. *Doutes proposés à l'Assemblée nationale, par un membre de l'Assemblée générale de la partie française de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1790).

The colonists did not wait for the arrival of the National Assembly's March 1790 decree to form local legislative bodies in Saint-Domingue to deal with the new political context created by the French Revolution. They had already begun to form provincial assemblies as early as 1788 and 1789. In February 1790, the more conservative, "autonomist" planters decided to convoke a "general assembly" of Saint-Domingue in the name of the colony's three provincial assemblies. In their "constitutional bases" of May 28, 1790, the Saint-Marc deputies (named after the town on the west coast in which they met) responded to the metropole's authorization of local elections by insisting that only they could legislate for the colony's internal regime, and by explicitly disqualifying non-whites from the privilege of active citizenship. In this pamphlet, one of the Saint-Marc deputies argues that the National Assembly implicitly surrendered its right to intervene in the colonies when it promulgated the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

9. *Appel interjetté par l'Assemblée générale de Saint-Domingue à l'Assemblée Nationale* [after October 1790].

This undated pamphlet by the Saint-Marc deputies was published in the aftermath of the October 1790 deliberations of the National Assembly. On August 4, 1790, Governor Peinier dissolved the Saint-Marc Assembly as a threat to metropolitan sovereignty over Saint-Domingue. (Peinier left intact the more moderate northern provincial assembly, which saw itself as a loyal alternative to the seditious radicalism of the Saint-Marc deputies). The Saint-Marc deputies fled to France aboard the *Léopard*. In October the National Assembly ordered them to appear in Paris to answer charges of conspiring in the cause of independence.

10. *Affiches Américaines*, March 5, 1791.

As soon as it became clear that none of the preexisting colonial assemblies would allow free people of color to vote in the newly authorized local elections, a small and unsuccessful merchant living in Paris named Vincent Ogé (1756-1791), who was of mixed race, secretly returned to Saint-Domingue to organize an armed rebellion, reportedly with the aid of the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson. Insisting that the National Assembly had implicitly authorized mulatto participation in the elections, Ogé joined forces with another free person of color named Jean-Baptiste Chavanne (1748-1791) to lead a rebellion in the northern



### PART 3: THE AUGUST 1791 SLAVE REVOLT

province in October 1790. The uprising was quickly and brutally suppressed. Ogé and Chavanne were publicly executed on the wheel in Cap Français in February 1791.

11. [Julien Raimond et al.], *Pétition nouvelle des citoyens de couleur des Isles françaises, à l'Assemblée nationale* (Paris, March 1791).

The repression of Ogé's rebellion did not end the efforts of the free people of color to assert their rights to active citizenship in Saint-Domingue. In March 1791, Julien Raimond (1744-1801), one of the leaders of the free colored community in Paris, was one of the authors of this renewed appeal to the National Assembly. The petition called upon the Assembly to enforce its own March 1790 mandate that "all persons paying taxes in the islands" were entitled to vote in the local elections. The need to qualify as taxpayers may help explain why the free people of color so often stressed their slaveholding status during this period.

### *Part 3: The August 1791 Slave Revolt*

1. "Carte des Environs du Cap François et des Paroisses qui en dépendent " in *Le Petit Atlas Maritime* (Paris, 1764).

The August 1791 slave revolt broke out in the northern plains of Saint-Domingue, in the area to the south of Cap Français. Two events are believed to have been of particular significance in triggering the revolt. The first was an August 14, 1791 meeting of slave leaders at the Lenormand plantation, in the parish of Plaine du nord, where the rebellion appears to have been planned and organized. The second was the famous voodoo ceremony on the night of August 21-22 in the forest of Bois Caïman, or "Alligator Wood," supposedly on the mountain of Morne Rouge. There continues to be much debate among historians as to the exact nature and timing of these events.

2. J. Brard, *Discours prononcé au commerce de Bordeaux assemblée* (Bordeaux, Aug. 23, 1791).

On May 15, 1791, after a highly contentious debate, the National Assembly decreed full civil rights for free people of color born to free parents, effectively enfranchising only a few hundred persons. Nonetheless, white planters regarded the measure as an intolerable intervention in the internal affairs of Saint-Domingue. On August 23, the day after the slave revolt broke out, but roughly two months before news of the uprising could have arrived in France, a planter from the northern province warned a sympathetic Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce that the decree would lead to a massacre of the white population.

3. *L'Assemblée générale de la partie française de Saint-Domingue aux Quatre-Vingt Trois Départemens* (Cap Français, Sept. 13, 1791).

Exiled and dispersed from the colony in August 1790, the autonomist Saint-Marc Assembly was succeeded by the like-minded Second Colonial Assembly. (The Saint-Marc deputies were effectively pardoned by the National Assembly in July 1791 and allowed to return to Saint-Domingue in late 1791). Both the Saint-Marc deputies and their planter-successors in the Second Colonial Assembly doubtless interpreted the news of the slave uprising as a vindication of their position that the legislature in Paris was causing chaos by interfering in the colony's internal affairs. More immediately, as this broadside addressed by the Second Colonial Assembly to the king and National Assembly testifies, the planters were desperately focused on securing relief from the government in France.

4. *Assemblée provinciale du Nord de Saint-Domingue, "Messieurs et chers compatriotes"* (Cap Français?, September 15, 1791). MS.

This remarkable letter details the devastation wrought by the August 1791 slave revolt. It was written by members of the Provincial Assembly of the North, the more moderate body of planters who opposed the autonomism of their counterparts in the Saint-Marc (and later the Second Colonial) Assembly. The northern province, they write, had been reduced to nothing more than a pile of "ashes." "Our fertile fields are flowing with the blood of our brethren." Over two hundred sugar plantations and the majority of the province's coffee plantations, the letter indicates, had been entirely destroyed.

5. *Assemblée provinciale du Nord de Saint-Domingue, Adresse de l'assemblée provinciale du Nord de Saint-Domingue à ses commettans* (Cap Français, Sept. 11, 1791).

One of the earliest of efforts to explain the slave outbreak of 1791 took the form of assertions that King Louis XVI of France had emancipated the slaves. Indeed, the connection between royalism and insurrection would grow so strong that for much of the revolution the slaves were forced to rebut charges that they were counter-revolutionary allies of the king, the Capetian "tyrant." In the immediate aftermath of the August 1791 revolt, however, the planters were concerned above all to refute the suggestion that the slaves' actions had royal backing. Condemning these rumors as the work of "true enemies" of Saint-Domingue, the Provincial Assembly of the North called upon the planters to unite or face "total ruin."

6. *Gazette de Saint-Domingue, politique, civile, économique, et littéraire* (No. 76, Wednesday, September 21, 1791).

The *Gazette de Saint-Domingue* began publication during the revolutionary years. The first reference to the August 21-22 slave revolt and its unfolding did not appear until September 3, suggesting an editorial agenda to minimize, if not deny altogether, the reality



#### PART 4: THE CIVIL COMMISSIONS, THE FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND ABOLITION (1791-1793)

of the northern planters' loss of control over their slaves. The report recounts the Colonial Assembly's decision to emancipate a plantation slave driver named Jean, in exchange for his help in capturing Jean-Baptiste Cap, one of the leaders of the August 1791 revolt. Emphasizing that it was important "in the present circumstances to present this example as a model" to the colony's slaves, the Colonial Assembly ordered the issuance of a silver medal in Jean's name. Jean-Baptiste Cap, the elected "king" of Limbé and Port-Margot parishes, had been captured while trying to recruit slaves on a plantation and was broken on the wheel.

7. *Le mot du vrai législateur sur la Révolte et les Incendies arrivées à Saint-Domingue, au mois d'Août 1791* (Paris, 1791).

Appeals to the National Assembly for retribution against those responsible for triggering the slave revolt were common currency in the months after 1791. This address urged the Assembly to inflict the severest possible punishment upon the "enemies of the French nation" and defended slavery as consistent with Christian scripture. In a theme that echoed through countless publications of the time, the authors insisted upon the indispensability of the colonial regime for maintaining France's prosperity and international stature.

8. Claude Louis Michel Milscent de Musset, *Sur les troubles de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, October 1791).

It was not surprising that a white planter community threatened by the events of August 1791 would turn to the free people of color for help. Mulattos had traditionally played a significant role in leading and serving in the colonial militias that chased down fugitive slaves in the mountains of Saint-Domingue. This service lent the free people of color a strategic importance that was recognized in October 1791 by a white planter named Milscent, himself a leader of a fugitive slave militia. Milscent intervened to inform the public that his experience in containing slave resistance is "necessarily linked to the facts that trouble the colony at this moment." For Milscent, mulatto equality with whites was essential to the very preservation of slavery in Saint-Domingue.

### *Part 4: The Civil Commissions, the Free People of Color, and Abolition (1791-1793)*

1. *Proclamation des commissaires nationaux-civils, Amnistie générale, invitation à la Paix, et rappel des Emigrants* (Cap Français, 1791).

In November 1791, the first of what would become three separate civil commissions dispatched by French metropolitan assemblies to manage the chaos of colonial events arrived in Cap Français. The first commission, consisting of Philippe Rose Roume de Saint-Laurent,

Frédéric Ignace de Mirbeck, and Edmond de Saint-Léger, was charged with restoring order in Saint-Domingue and enforcing the decrees of the National Assembly, including the controversial May 1791 decree that granted full political rights to a limited segment of the free people of color. The commissioners had been initially appointed in July, before the slave revolt broke out; their arrival in the colony under radically changed circumstances only strengthened the pre-existing planter suspicion of metropolitan interference.

2. Marguerite-Elie Guadet, *Opinion sur les colonies* (Paris, March 23, 1792).

For a brief but critical period after late August 1791 the white planters of Saint-Domingue and their allies in France seemed to forget all about what they had earlier insisted was the necessity of maintaining a strict regime of racial discrimination against the free people of color. Marguerite-Elie Guadet, a deputy from the Gironde, entered the debate in the National Assembly to argue that the oppression of the mulattos must end in Saint-Domingue. Only by doing so, he observed, would whites be able to secure the cooperation of the free people of color in suppressing the slave revolt.

3. *Réflexions politiques sur les troubles de Saint-Domingue par les commissaires des citoyens de couleur de Saint-Marc* (Paris, 1792).

In April 1792, the Legislative Assembly (the successor to the National, or Constituent, Assembly in France) ended all racial discrimination against free people of color in the colonies. The decision vindicated those who believed that the Declaration of the Rights of Man ought to extend across racial lines, but also gave the free people of color a reason to ally themselves more fully with the white planters at a time of great mutual insecurity. In this June 1792 pamphlet, Juste Chanlatte (1766-1828) and several other prominent free people of color from Saint-Marc argued that only a "constitutional union between whites and people of color" could return the slaves to the plantations. Violent conflict between whites and mulattos continued as before, but the 1791 revolt also greatly intensified the hostility between freed persons of color and the slaves.

4. Polverel, Sonthonax, and Ailhaud, *Proclamation au nom de la Nation* (Cap Français, September 24, 1792).

A second civil commission was dispatched to the colony in June 1792, with the ongoing task of "restoring order" to Saint-Domingue, but also to enforce the April law granting full political rights to the free people of color. Léger- Félicité Sonthonax, Étienne Polverel, and Jean Antoine Ailhaud arrived with 6,000 soldiers in Saint-Domingue in late September, only a week after the monarchy was abolished and the first French republic was declared. Their momentous tenure in Saint-Domingue, which lasted until the summer of 1794, witnessed the overlapping radicalization of both the French and Haitian revolutions. In this pamphlet, they made clear their determination that henceforth only two classes of people would exist in the colony: slave and free.



PART 4: THE CIVIL COMMISSIONS, THE FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND ABOLITION (1791-1793)

5. *Prospectus pour le rétablissement des Affiches Américaines* (Port-au-Prince, after April 4, 1792).

This short-lived effort to resume publication of the *Affiches Américaines* in Cap Français, after it had been disrupted by the August 1791 slave revolt, revealed volumes about the anxieties of white planters towards the middle and end of 1792. The prospectus argued that the Revolution, while liberating the oppressed in France, had opened a "Pandora's box" in the colonies. Among the causes of the colony's distress, the author singled out the explosion of printed material (pamphlets and newspapers) since the beginning of the Revolution. But it was the characterization of the newspaper's hoped-for audience – both whites and free people of color, united by a "common interest" – that most neatly illustrated the changing nature of colonial politics in the new Saint-Domingue.

6. Baillio, aîné, *Mémoire pour les citoyens . . . déportés de Saint-Domingue: Contre Léger-Félicité Sonthonax* (March 1793).

Far less is known about the role of the *petits blancs* (or poor whites) in the early phases of the Revolution than about the planter and mulatto elites. They seem to have played an important role in the emergence of "patriot" Jacobin clubs in Saint-Domingue though membership in such groups at other levels of society was driven at least as much by the changing political climate in France as by local political conviction. In this pamphlet, a *petit blanc*, Baillio, and his associates condemned Sonthonax for sponsoring a race war in Saint-Domingue and failing to enforce the April 4 decree. Baillio's charges were entirely hypocritical; he and other *petits blancs* had been deported by Sonthonax for encouraging a December 2, 1792 race riot in Cap Français.

7. P. F. Page, *Développement des causes des troubles et désastres des colonies françaises . . .* (Paris?, 1793).

Two of the most vociferous critics of Sonthonax and Polverel throughout the middle and late phases of the revolution were Pierre François Page, a planter from the southern town of Jérémie, and Augustin Jean Brulley, from la Grande-Rivière d'Ennery in the northern province. Page and Brulley sought to impeach the civil commissioners for renewing the tradition of "ministerial despotism" that colonists had long complained of in their metropole-sponsored administrators. The two planters also tried to associate Sonthonax and Polverel with British designs on Saint-Domingue, and excoriated the commissioners for promoting the political aspirations of the free colored community pursuant to what the planters insisted was a false interpretation of the 1685 Code Noir. Article 59 of the Code granted freed slaves civil rights equal to those of natural-born Frenchmen.

8. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, *Proclamation au Nom de la République* (Cap Français, 1793).

Sonthonax's decision on August 29, 1793, to free the slaves of the northern province of Saint-Domingue is one of the most famous and also most ambiguous moments of the Haitian Revolution. Announcing that a "new order of things will be born" and that the "old servitude will disappear," the emancipation is often seen as one of the great humanitarian vindications

of revolutionary ideology. A onetime lawyer and a committed Jacobin, Sonthonax was also an ambitious revolutionary politician determined to make his mark on the course of events. His proclamation came at a time when a dramatic augmentation of French forces was desperately needed to counter the combined Spanish and British military threats.

9. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, *Au nom de la République française, à tous les Français de Saint-Domingue* (Saint-Marc, 1793).

Planter hostility to Sonthonax's emancipation proclamation would severely complicate the civil commissioner's work in Saint-Domingue and trail him for the remainder of his life. A military officer known as the Marquis de Lasalle was sent to Saint-Domingue in 1792 to command the western province, and he subsequently served a period as the colony's temporary governor in 1793. Before taking exile in Philadelphia, Lasalle sought to encourage the colonists to defy Sonthonax's authority, claiming that the commissioner had been coerced into freeing the slaves and was planning to revoke the emancipation. Here Sonthonax denied the allegations and insisted he was preparing a more general emancipation to cover the western and southern provinces (enacted by Polverel in October 1793).

10. *Testament de mort d'Ogé, et adresse de Pinchinat aux hommes de couleur . . . avec la réfutation de cette adresse; par un habitant de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, [1793?]).

Notwithstanding the justifiable association of August 1791 with the beginnings of the slave revolt, that month also marked the beginning of an uprising of free coloreds in the western province of Saint-Domingue. The two rebellions unfolded at different paces and with different objectives, but together they stretched thin the colony's military resources available to suppress them, and thus they helped each other to gain ground in 1792 and 1793. Leadership of the mulatto revolt in the west fell to Pierre Pinchinat (1746-1804) as early as August 1791. Pinchinat's white planter enemies charged that he was in the pay of the "abolitionists" Brissot and Sonthonax, and that he aimed (like Vincent Ogé) to massacre the white population.

## *Part 5: War and Occupation (1793-1798)*

1. *Courrier politique de la France et de ses colonies*, No. 73 (Philadelphia, March 6, 1794).

In September 1793 British forces arriving from Jamaica began a five-year occupation of parts of the western and southern provinces of Saint-Domingue. Sonthonax and his fellow civil commissioners thus found themselves managing a three-way territorial war against both Britain and Spain. In the western and southern provinces this war partly took the form of efforts to secure the allegiance of the free people of color. In this exchange of let-

ters, John Ford, the commander of the British squadron, warned Sonthonax of an impending invasion of Port-au-Prince and promised to safeguard the interests of the free people of color. Sonthonax replied that the city's white residents were sworn to "remain French or die," and that they would never again allow their "brothers of color" to suffer the "yoke of barbarous prejudices."

2. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, *À la Convention Nationale* (Paris, 1794),

In the aftermath of slave emancipation and British invasion in late 1793, a group of planter representatives began an unyielding campaign before the National Convention to impeach Sonthonax and Polverel as "counter-revolutionaries" responsible for the "disasters" of Saint-Domingue. The National Convention succeeded to the Legislative Assembly following the overthrow of the French monarchy in August 1792. In addition to Page and Brulley, the group included Jean-Baptiste Millet (a planter from Jérémie) and the lawyer-planter Larchevêque-Thibaud, deported from the northern province by Sonthonax. In June 1793 Sonthonax and his fellow commissioners left Saint-Domingue for Paris to defend themselves. Sonthonax insisted here that the colony would have succumbed entirely to foreign invasion without his decision to free the slaves, which created 200,000 new soldiers "in a single day" for the Republic.

3. *Débats entre les accusateurs et les accusés, dans l'affaire des colonies* (Paris, 1795),

After a series of delays, the trial of Sonthonax and Polverel proceeded under the auspices of the National Convention's colonial commission, chaired by an antislavery Parisian lawyer named Jean Philippe Garran de Coulon. Known as "the affair of the colonies," the debates between the planter representatives and the civil commissioners lasted from January to August 1795, and resulted in an acquittal for Sonthonax (Polverel died midway through the trial). The civil commissioners argued that Saint-Domingue had already been in the midst of upheaval before they arrived, due to the brutally repressive tactics of Brulley and company in responding to the unrest in the northern province.

4. *Relation de l'anniversaire de la Fédération du 14 Juillet 1789, célébré à Charleston* (Charleston, 1795).

The flow of white and free colored émigrés from Saint-Domingue began with the August 1791 slave revolt and continued in fits and starts until the end of the Haitian Revolution in 1804. Some of these planters brought domestic and other slaves with them to North American port towns such as Charleston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. This newspaper article recounts the émigré celebration of Bastille Day in Charleston on July 14, 1795. The émigré communities were at pains to advertise their loyalty to the French republican cause and defend themselves from charges of counter-revolutionary treason.



5. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, *Extrait d'une lettre du Commissaire Sonthonax au Général Beauvais* (Les Cayes, 1797).

One of the chief axes of division within Saint-Domingue throughout the 1790s was that between the slave revolution in the north, led by Toussaint Louverture, and the mulatto effort to consolidate power in the south, led by André Rigaud (1761-1811). Rigaud was a former member of the French contingent that had served in the American revolutionary war. In this letter written from Les Cayes, Rigaud denied allegations that he was entering into negotiations with the British to surrender Léogane, and promised to put up a fight for the southern province. In 1799, Louverture's and Rigaud's forces began fighting the War of the South, which would end in victory for Louverture in August 1800.

6. P. F. Barbault-Royer, *Du Gouvernement de Saint-Domingue, de Laveaux, de Villatte, des agents du Directoire* (Paris, 1797).

This diatribe against two of the key military figures in Saint-Domingue as of 1795 and 1796 was yet another attempt to explain the breakdown of order in the colony by blaming it on persons connected to Sonthonax. Named interim governor of the colony by Sonthonax back in October 1793, Etienne Maynard Bizefrance de Laveaux (a white officer) rose to the top of the military hierarchy to become a division general by 1795. Jean-Louis Villatte was a mulatto who had been given an important military commission by Sonthonax in 1793 and later led a movement against Laveaux. In the passage shown here Laveaux was singled out for destroying the peace of Saint-Domingue.

7. Corps législatif. Conseil des cinq-cents, *Discours de Villaret-Joyeuse . . . sur l'importance des Colonies et les moyens de les pacifier* (Paris, 1797).

The restoration of "order" and French sovereignty in Saint-Domingue remained a priority for both the metropolitan government and the planters throughout the years of British occupation and Toussaint Louverture's consolidation of leadership over the slave revolution. In this address to the Council of 500 (the lower house of the French legislature during the period of the Directory), a former military officer and then-deputy named Louis Thomas Villaret de Joyeuse (1748-1812) advocated the use of force to pacify the "Vendée" of Saint-Domingue. He meant to compare the slave revolution to the royalist, pro-clergy peasant uprising in the west of France in late 1793 that was brutally repressed by the French revolutionary armies, at the cost of tens of thousands of lives. Villaret de Joyeuse would later serve under General Leclerc as commander of the French fleet that invaded Saint-Domingue in 1802.

8. Jean Philippe Garran de Coulon, *Rapport sur les troubles de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1797).

Not all metropolitan voices in 1797 were raised in favor of a counter-revolutionary restoration of slavery in Saint-Domingue. Garran de Coulon closed his chairmanship of the

commission assigned to investigate the causes of the slave revolution with this report "on the troubles of Saint-Domingue." Technically a summary of the trial of Sonthonax and Polverel before the National Convention, the report remains one of the most important contemporaneous histories of the Haitian Revolution. In his introduction Garran de Coulon warned that any attempt to return the Haitians to slavery would result in the irreversible loss of Saint-Domingue and the massacre of the colony's remaining white population.

## *Part 6: Toussaint Louverture (1797-1801)*

1. Charles-Yves Cousin D'Avallon, *Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture* (Paris, 1802).

Shown here is the first published portrait of Toussaint Louverture. Although printed during his lifetime, it was probably not drawn from life. (See frontispiece of this publication.)

2. Toussaint Louverture, *Réfutation de quelques Assertions d'un Discours prononcé par Viénot Vaublanc* (Paris, 1797).

By late 1796 Louverture had consolidated his control over the northern province, and in May 1797 Sonthonax named him commander in chief of French forces in the colony. The black leader's rise to power made him a frequent target of attack in the metropolitan assemblies. In this reply to a speech by one of his most vociferous critics, Louverture rejected the suggestion that force was necessary to return the slaves to work. He also pointed to the French Revolutionary Terror of 1793-94 by way of arguing that the Haitian Revolution was not alone in resorting to the use of violence – a passage that suggests the involvement of someone trying to settle a score in the French domestic political situation.

3. France. Corps législatif. (1795-1814). Conseil des anciens, *Discours prononcé par C. Laveaux, Député de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1797).

Among Louverture's more crucial supporters in the French military hierarchy in Saint-Domingue was the former governor and French army division general Laveaux, who appointed Louverture his lieutenant in April 1796. After Sonthonax returned to Saint-Domingue in May to commence his second mission, Louverture was elevated to the rank of division general. His authority rendered obsolete, Laveaux returned to France as a deputy of Saint-Domingue to the Council of the Ancients, the upper house of the French legislature, where he defended his former protégé from critics. Citing Louverture's decision to spare the lives of 200 French émigré prisoners, Laveaux declared that he "must show you the generosity of a black who was [once] a slave."

4. *Arrêtés des différentes Communes de la Colonie de Saint-Domingue adressées à l'Agent particulier du Directoire* (Cap Français?, 1799).

In January 1798 the Directory replaced Sonthonax with a former member of the military command that had handled the repression of the 1793 Vendée uprising in western France, General Gabriel Marie Théodore Joseph d'Hédouville. The ex-slaves instantly suspected Hédouville of wanting to return them to the plantations. Groups of former slaves around the colony drew up petitions asking Louverture to assume full control. A petition from the parish of Petite-Rivière, in the western province, is a rare example of a Haitian Creole document from this period. The former slaves declared their refusal to work until Moïse, one of Louverture's military subordinates who led his men in an uprising against French authority, was released from prison.

5. "Extrait d'une lettre d'un Citoyen nouvellement arrivé de Saint-Domingue, à un de ses amis," in *Bulletin officiel de Saint-Domingue* [Numéro 13] (Cap Français, April 13, 1799).

In August 1797 Louverture more or less forced Sonthonax out of the colony, leaving the black leader as the highest ranking official in Saint Domingue, general in chief of the French army. Stories about Louverture's origins, his rise to prominence, and his ambitions for the future of Saint-Domingue circulated far and wide, in both the Caribbean and in France. In this January 1799 letter, an anonymous writer related the perhaps apocryphal story of Louverture reading the Abbé Raynal's *Histoire des deux indés* before the Revolution and taking inspiration from its foreshadowing of a Black Spartacus in the Caribbean. But it was the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789, we are told, that gave Louverture the actual idea for the role he would take.

6. Marcus Rainsford, *A Memoir of Transactions that took place in St. Domingo, in the spring of 1799* (London, 1802).

This memoir by a British military officer who accidentally found his way to Saint-Domingue near the height of Louverture's power provides a revealing glimpse of how foreign observers perceived the black general and Haiti. The American hotel in Cap Français where Rainsford stayed presented a "perfect system of equality," with blacks and whites of different social ranks dining and conversing naturally with each other. When Louverture dropped in unexpectedly for dinner, Rainsford reports, he declined to take the head of the table.



## *Part 7: The War of Independence (1802-1803) and the Struggle for Recognition*

1. Jean-Louis Dubroca, *La vie de Toussaint-Louverture, chef des noirs insurgés de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1802).

The campaign to vilify Louverture acquired even greater ideological stakes with the impending invasion of Saint-Domingue under the orders of Napoleon Bonaparte in early 1802. According to an 1814 *History of Toussaint Louverture* by M. D. Stephens, published in London, Bonaparte's regime hired a writer named Jean-Louis Dubroca (1757-1835) to lead the propaganda war against Louverture. Dubroca's 1802 book (translated into English the same year) castigated the black general for what it described as his "profound hypocrisy and desperate ambitions." In 1805 Dubroca published a similar diatribe against Dessalines that appeared in Spanish and German versions.

2. *Recensement* (Cap Haïtien, 1804).

The revolution ended slavery in Saint-Domingue but not forced labor. Louverture and several of the early governments of independent Haiti used the army to impose forced work on the plantations, a decision not made any easier by the threat of international embargo and the prospect of famine. This intriguing plantation census form from 1804, the first year of Haitian independence, shows various head counts for whites, free people of color, and free domestic servants, but none for slaves. On the reverse side, however, several hundred (possibly several thousand, the writing is unclear) "slaves" are listed as being subject to the head tax.

3. Jean Abeille, *Essai sur nos colonies, et sur le rétablissement de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1805).

Starting in October 1802, four months after Louverture was effectively kidnapped and deported to France, the Leclerc expedition was beaten back by the combined forces of Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Alexandre Pétion. For more than two decades after Haitian independence was declared on January 1, 1804, however, the threat of another French invasion hung constantly over the new state. In this 1805 pamphlet, an exiled planter named Jean Abeille argued that "negotiations alone" would not bring Saint-Domingue back under French control. He called for the use of force if necessary to restore the French empire's most valuable possession.

4. J. Grouvel, *Développement du plan proposé pour la rentrée en possession de l'île St.-Domingue* (Paris, 1814).

That Haitian fears of another French invasion were not illusory is demonstrated by this 1814 pamphlet suggesting a plan for the reconquest and resettlement of Saint-Domingue. In a

companion volume published the year before, the author invoked the success of the British in suppressing slave resistance in both Saint-Domingue and Jamaica as a model for the French to follow. The present volume opened with an epigraph rehearsing the curse of Ham, the biblical passage traditionally used in the early modern period to justify black slavery. The Haitian Revolution led to a resurgence of anti-black racism throughout the early nineteenth-century Atlantic world.

5. *Procès verbal des séances du conseil général de la nation* (Haïti, 1814).

Negotiations between France and Haiti over recognition of the latter's independence were begun in 1809 by the restoration monarchy of Louis XVIII. They dragged on throughout the 1810s. In 1814, Henri Christophe, a former general in Louverture's army who had proclaimed himself president of (northern) Haiti in 1807 and then king in 1811, convened a "general council" of the nation's civil and military leaders at the royal palace of Sans-Souci. The Haitian foreign minister read to the assembled delegates a letter from Louis XVIII's envoy, General Dauxion Lavaysse. Promising that the "reign of prejudices" had been ended forever, Lavaysse nonetheless threatened that France would re-invade Haiti and "replace the population" with new imports of African slaves if Christophe did not agree to acknowledge French sovereignty.

6. *Pièces officielles relatives aux Négociations du Gouvernement Français avec le Gouvernement Haïtien, pour traiter de la formalité de la Reconnaissance de l'indépendance d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1824).

France finally recognized Haitian independence in 1825, in exchange for Haiti's payment of a debilitating indemnity of 150 million francs. France claimed the indemnity on behalf of former colonists who had lost their plantations and fortunes during the revolution. In this document, published one year prior to the final agreement, the Haitian state expressed its frustration with the fickle and imperious negotiating stances of the French government, which varied from a claim of "absolute sovereignty" over Haiti in 1814, to indemnity in 1822, to "external sovereignty" in 1824.

## ***Part 8: Impact and Representations of the Revolution***

1. St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery* (Philadelphia, 1796).

The news of the Haitian Revolution echoed throughout the slave societies of the Atlantic world. The immediate effects of the Revolution were felt most strongly in the Caribbean, but its ideological impact was perhaps greatest in the United States, where thousands of French planters went to take refuge. In this 1796 treatise advocating the gradual abolition of slavery in America, a leading Virginian jurist and antifederalist named St. George Tucker wrote that the Haitian experience was "enough to make one shudder" in fear of "similar calamities in this country." He recommended colonization in unsettled western territory rather than full political equality and coexistence with whites.

## PART 8: IMPACT AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE REVOLUTION

### 2. Marcus Rainsford, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti* (London, 1805)

One of the few fully sympathetic accounts of the Haitian Revolution by outsiders was written by the British military officer Marcus Rainsford. Rainsford's volume opened with several graphic engravings by J. Barlow illustrating the brutal methods used by French invading forces to repress the Haitian armies in 1802 and 1803, as well as the violent retribution exacted by Louverture's and Dessalines's men. This engraving dramatized the use of bloodhounds that General Rochambeau is said to have brought from Cuba to aid in the "extermination" of the black forces.

### 3. Jean-Louis Dubroca, *Vida de J. J. Dessalines* (Mexico, 1806).

Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who succeeded to leadership of the war of independence following Louverture's deportation to France in the summer of 1802, quickly became a symbol for foreign observers of the violence and authoritarianism of the Haitian Revolution. After vilifying Louverture at the behest of Bonaparte's regime in 1802, Jean-Louis Dubroca published an equally caustic account of Dessalines's life. The 1806 Spanish version was the only edition of the book to include the engraving displayed here, which featured Dessalines holding the decapitated head of a white woman in one hand, his sword in the other. The book also appeared in a German translation.

### 4. *Le Conseil d'Etat, au peuple et à l'armée de terre et mer d'Hayti* (Cap-Henri, Haïti, 1811).

A series of former generals in Toussaint Louverture's army succeeded to the leadership of Haiti after independence in 1804. Within a few years of independence, Haiti was effectively split into two halves: a northern monarchy led by former black slaves, and a mulatto republic in the south. One of Louverture's former officers, Henri Christophe, proclaimed himself president of (northern) Haiti in 1807. In 1811, he convened his council of state to revise the 1807 Constitution with the goal of instituting a hereditary monarchy and nobility in Haiti. Denouncing the "horrible convulsions" and "factions" that had come before, Christophe's government insisted that a single, hereditary ruler was necessary to bring stability to Haiti. The pamphlet notes that even though Haitians are, like the Americans, "a new people," the institution of the American presidency was unsuited to the Old World origins of Haitian society.

### 5. *Manuscrit d'un voyage de France à Saint Domingue, à la Havanne, et aux Unis états [sic] d'Amérique* [France?, 1816]. MS.

The anonymous author of this manuscript eyewitness account of the Haitian Revolution claims to have been present continuously in Saint-Domingue from the revolution's beginnings in 1789 to its end in 1804, a feat that not many white residents of the colony can claim to have matched. His parents dispatched the author to Saint-Domingue after he refused to obey their wish that he become a Capuchin friar. In Part II of his manuscript, dated 1816, the author writes



that the "troubles began in this unfortunate colony towards the end of September 1789" with the importation of the French revolutionary symbol, the "cursed" red-white-and-blue cockade.

6. Adalbert John Volck, Confederate War Etchings (Baltimore?, 1863?) "Writing the Emancipation Proclamation." (From the collection of the John Hay Library).

The U.S. was one of the last countries in the Western Hemisphere to recognize Haiti. In 1863, two years after the Civil War began, President Lincoln finally accorded diplomatic recognition to the black state. He did so on the heels of a failed scheme to colonize newly emancipated American slaves on the unsettled Île à Vache off the southern coast of Haiti. This pro-slavery caricature shows Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation with his foot on the Constitution and the twin symbols of "St. Ossawatomie" (the famous white antislavery militant John Brown) and the Haitian slave revolt behind him.

## *Maps and Prints*

1. "Carte réduite du Golphe du Mexique et des Isles de l'Amérique," in Jacques Nicolas Bellin, *Hydrographie Française* (Paris, 1772).

The eighteenth-century French Atlantic empire included, in addition to New France (Canada) and several other outposts in North America, the Caribbean islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Saint-Christophe, as well as a slice of the Guianas on the northeastern coast of South America. The most profitable of all French possessions in the New World, however, consisted of the western third of the island of Hispaniola (Saint-Domingue), where by 1789 close to 50 percent of Europe's supplies of sugar and coffee were grown. French colonization in Saint-Domingue began in the mid-seventeenth century, with the establishment of privateer and buccaneer strongholds on its shores.

2. P. L. De Griwtonn, *Carte de l'Isle de St. Domingue* (Paris, ca. 1760). Engraved map.

This engraved map by the Dutch cartographer P. L. de Griwtonn shows the island of Hispaniola circa 1760. At bottom is a detailed description of the French (western) and Spanish (eastern) sides of the island, a division that was formalized by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. The French colony of Saint-Domingue was divided into three provinces for administrative purposes: northern, western, and southern. The island's proximity to Cuba and Puerto Rico is also reflected on the map. On the eve of the Revolution, Saint-Domingue was populated by approximately 500,000 slaves, 40,000 whites, and 30,000 free people of color (or *gens de couleur*).

3. *Plan de quelques habitations du quartier de Limonade* (Paris, ca. 1785).

Each of the three provinces of Saint-Domingue was divided into a set of small administrative units called parishes. The parish of Limonade was located in the northern province, to the east of the commercial capital of Cap Français. Like most of the other parishes in the northern plains, Limonade was dominated almost exclusively by sugar plantations, several of which are represented (in all their geometric precision) in this map from the mid-1780s.

4. René Phéliepeau, *Plan de la ville du Cap François* (Paris, 1786 ).

Throughout the eighteenth century, the city of Cap Français was the undisputed commercial and cultural capital of French Saint-Domingue. Until the colonial administrative headquarters were transferred to Port-au-Prince at mid-century, Cap Français was also the colony's political center.

5. Jean Bounet Péchon, *Plan du Port-au-Prince et environs, avec un projet de fortifier la ville en la diminuant du côté du Sud* (Paris, 1794). MS.

Port-au-Prince became the administrative capital of Saint-Domingue in 1750. Like Cap Français, it was the site of one of the colony's two high courts, or *Conseils Supérieurs*. In September 1793, British forces arriving from Jamaica began a five-year occupation of parts of the southern and western provinces. The British started by occupying the southern port of Jérémie and would eventually take Port-au-Prince itself in June 1794.

6. P. L. de Griwtonn, *Carte de l'Isle de St. Domingue avec les routes* (Paris, 1801). Engraved map.

This engraved 1801 map, also by Griwtonn, shows the island of Hispaniola and its principal roads after Toussaint Louverture succeeded in conquering both the French and Spanish sides in January 1801. Louverture divided the entire island into five departments. His control over the Spanish side proved to be short-lived, however. In June 1802 he was captured by an invading French army and deported to France. The division of Hispaniola between Spanish- and French/Haitian Creole-speaking sides persists into the present.

7. *Toussaint Louverture Chef des Noirs Insurgés de Saint Domingue* (Paris, 1802)

This equestrian engraving of Toussaint Louverture, "leader of the insurgent blacks of Saint-Domingue," was intended to capture a moment when the black general was at the height of his power. In 1800 Louverture had defeated the mulatto forces led by Rigaud in the southern department, thereby giving the black general control over all of the territory of French Saint-Domingue. The following year, 1801, saw Louverture extend his sovereignty over the island's eastern (or Spanish) side as well. This success proved to be short-lived. Louverture was captured and deported to France in 1802, where he died a prisoner of Napoleon in an Alpine prison near the Swiss border.

8. [Alexandre Pétion ] (Paris? Between 1807 and 1818?)

Alexandre Pétion (1770-1818) was the first president of the (southern) Republic of Haiti upon its establishment in 1807. He served in this office until 1816, when a new constitution made him President for life. Pétion had risen to prominence as an officer in the French army under the French emissary Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, fighting against British forces in Saint-Domingue. He sided with the mulatto uprising in the south against Toussaint Louverture and left the island for France in 1800 upon Louverture's victory. He returned as a French army officer with the Leclerc expedition in 1802, then switched sides when it became clear that Dessalines and the black army would prevail. Pétion was one of the signatories of the act of Haitian independence in January 1804.

9. Nicolas Ponce, *Recueil de vues des lieux principaux de la colonie Française de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1791).

The two engravings shown here are both by Nicolas Ponce. At the time of their publication in 1791, Ponce was president of the Musée de Paris and of several French academies, including one in Cap Français. Originally intended to serve as illustrations for Moreau de Saint-Méry's multi-volume work on the history and laws of Saint-Domingue, Ponce's engravings provide a rare window onto colonial urban life on the eve of the French Revolution. In one, freed people of color and slaves are displayed in various forms of attire. In another, domestic slave women are washing clothes by a river. In still another, slaves are seen dancing and playing with a baton.

In an engraving of Cap Français, the bustling commercial port on the northern coast of Saint-Domingue, Ponce offers a panoramic view from behind the town's prison, where captured fugitive slaves (among others) were held until they could be reclaimed by their masters. The meticulously ordered geometry and highly advanced development of the city attest to its political and economic significance in the French colonial order. Cap Français was the site of one of the colony's two high courts, or *Conseils Supérieurs*, which heard cases on appeals from the local tribunals and provided a central forum in which matters of administrative concern to the planter elite could be debated.



## *For Further Reading*

The following reference work proved particularly useful in the preparation of this exhibition: Michèle Oriol, *Histoire et Dictionnaire de la Révolution et de l'Indépendance d'Haiti* (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Fondation pour la Recherche Iconographique et Documentaire, 2002).

Visitors to the exhibition who would like to know more about the Haitian Revolution and its context might start with one or more of the following books: Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (London: Verso, 1988); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990); David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1989).



## *Appendix*

The Declaration of Independence of Haiti as translated and printed in Marcus Rainsford, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti: Comprehending a View of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Santo Domingo; with Its Antient and Modern State* (London, 1805)



## *Declaration of the Independence of the Blacks of St. Domingo.*

### PROCLAMATION OF DESSALINES, CHRISTOPHE, AND CLERVAUX, CHIEFS OF ST. DOMINGO.

In the Name of the Black People, and Men of Color of St. Domingo:

THE INDEPENDENCE OF ST. DOMINGO is proclaimed. Restored to our primitive dignity, we have asserted our rights; we swear never to yield them to any power on earth; the frightful veil of prejudice is torn to pieces, be it so for ever. Woe be to them who would dare, to put together its bloody tatters.

Oh! Landholders of St. Domingo, wandering in foreign countries, by proclaiming our independence, we do not forbid you, indiscriminately, from returning to your property; far be from us this unjust idea. We are not ignorant that there are some among you that have renounced their former errors, abjured the injustice of their exorbitant pretensions, and acknowledged the lawfulness of the cause for which we have been spilling our blood these twelve years. Toward those men who do us justice, we will act as brothers; let them rely for ever on our esteem and friendship; let them return among us. The God who protects us, the God of Freeman, bids us to stretch out towards them our conquering arms. But as for those, who, intoxicated with foolish pride, interested slaves of a guilty pretension, are blinded so much as to believe themselves the essence of human nature, and assert that they are destined by heaven to be our masters and our tyrants, let them never come near the land of St. Domingo: if they come hither, they will only meet with chains or deportation; then let them stay where they are; tormented by their well-deserved misery, and the frowns of the just men whom they have too long mocked, let them still continue to move, unpitied and unnoticed by all.

We have sworn not to listen with clemency towards all those who would dare to speak to us of slavery; we will be inexorable, perhaps even cruel, towards all troops who, themselves forgetting the object for which they have not ceased fighting since 1780, should come from Europe to bring among us death and servitude. Nothing is too dear, and all means are lawful, to men from whom it is wished to tear the first of all blessings. Were they to cause rivers and torrents of blood to run; were they, in order to maintain their liberty, to conflagrate seven eighths of the globe, they are innocent before the tribunal of Providence, that never created men, to see them groaning under so harsh and shameful a servitude.

In the various commotions that took place, some inhabitants against whom we had not to complain, have been victims by the cruelty of a few soldiers or cultivators, too much blinded by the remembrance of their past sufferings to be able to distinguish the good and humane land-owners from those that were unfeeling and cruel, we lament with all feeling souls so deplorable an end, and declare to the world, whatever may be said to the contrary by wicked people, that the murders were committed contrary to the wishes of our hearts. It was impossible, especially in the crisis in which the colony was, to be able to prevent or stop those hor-

APPENDIX: THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF HAITI

rors. They who are in the least acquainted with history, know that a people, when assailed by civil dissensions, though they may be the most polished on earth, give themselves up to every species of excess, and the authority of the chiefs, at that time not firmly supported, in a time of revolution cannot punish all that are guilty, without meeting with new difficulties. But now a-days the Aurora of peace hails us, with the glimpse of a less stormy time; now that the calm of victory has succeeded to the trouble of a dreadful war, every thing in St. Domingo ought to assume a new face, and its government henceforward be that of justice.

Done at the Head-Quarters, Fort Dauphin, November 29, 1803.

(Signed)

Dessalines.

Christophe.

Clerveaux.

True Copy,

B. Aimé, Secretary.

No. XIV.

## *Proclamation for a Solemn Abjuration of the French Nation.*

LIBERTY OR DEATH!—NATIVE ARMY.

THE GENERAL IN CHIEF TO THE PEOPLE OF HAYTI.

CITIZENS,

IT IS NOT ENOUGH to have expelled from your country the barbarians who have for ages stained it with blood—it is not enough to have curbed the factions which, succeeding each other by turns, sported with a phantom of liberty which France exposed to their eyes. It is become necessary, by a last act of national authority, to ensure for ever the empire of liberty in the country which has given us birth. It is necessary to deprive an inhuman government, which has hitherto held our minds in a state of the most humiliating torpidity, of every hope of being enabled again to enslave us. Finally, it is necessary to live independent, or die. Independence or Death! Let these sacred words serve to rally us—let them be signals of battle, and of our re-union.

Citizens—Countrymen—I have assembled on this solemn day, those courageous chiefs, who, on the eve of receiving the last breath of expiring liberty, have lavished their blood to preserve it. These generals, who have conducted your struggles against tyranny, have not yet done. The French name still darkens our plains: every thing recalls the remembrance of the cruelties of that barbarous people. Our laws, our customs, our cities, every thing bears the characteristic of the French.—Hearken to what I say!—the French still have a footing in our island! and you believe yourselves free and independent of that republic, which has fought all nations, it is true, but never conquered those who would be free! What! victims for fourteen years by credulity and forbearance! conquered not by French armies, but by the canting eloquence of the proclamations of their agents! When shall we be wearied with breathing the same air with them? What have we in common with that bloody-minded people? Their cruelties compared to our moderation—their colour to ours—the extension of seas which separate us—our avenging climate—all plainly tell us they are not our brethren; that they never will become such; and, if they find an asylum among us, they will still be the instigators of our troubles and of our divisions. Citizens, men, women, young and old, cast round your eyes on every part of this island; seek there your wives, your husbands, your brothers, your sisters—what did I say? seek your children—your children at the breast, what is become of them? I shudder to tell it—the *prey of vultures*. Instead of these interesting victims, the affrighted eye sees only their assassins—tigers still covered with their blood, and whose terrifying presence reproaches you for your insensibility, and your guilty tardiness to avenge them—what do you wait for, to appease their manes? Remember that you have wished your remains to be laid by the side of your fathers—When you have driven out tyranny—will you descend into their tombs, without having avenged them? No: their bones would repulse yours. And ye, invaluable men, intrepid Generals, who, insensible to private sufferings, have given new life to liberty, by lavishing your blood; know, that you have done nothing if you do not give to the



#### APPENDIX: THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF HAITI

nations a terrible, though just example, of the vengeance that ought to be exercised by a people proud of having recovered its liberty, and zealous of maintaining it. Let us intimidate those, who might dare to attempt depriving us of it again: let us begin with the French; let them shudder at approaching our shores, if not on account of the cruelties they have committed, at least at the terrible resolution we are going to make—To devote to death whatsoever native of France should soil with his sacrilegious footstep, this territory of liberty.

We have dared to be free—let us continue free by ourselves, and for ourselves; let us imitate the growing child; his own strength breaks his leading-strings, which become useless and troublesome to him in his walk. What are the people who have fought us? what people would reap the fruits of our labours? and what a dishonourable absurdity, to conquer to be slaves!

*Slaves* — leave to the French nation this odious epithet; they have conquered to be no longer free—let us walk in other footsteps; let us imitate other nations, who, carrying their solicitude into futurity, and dreading to leave posterity an example of cowardice, have preferred to be exterminated, rather than be erased from the list of free people. Let us, at the same time, take care, lest a spirit of proselytism should destroy the work—let our neighbours breathe in peace—let them live peaceably under the shield of those laws which they have framed for themselves; let us beware of becoming revolutionary fire-brands—of creating ourselves the legislators of the Antilles—of considering as a glory the disturbing the tranquility of the neighbouring islands; they have not been, like the one we inhabit, drenched with the innocent blood of the inhabitants—they have no vengeance to exercise against the authority that protects them; happy, never to have experienced the pestilence that has destroyed us, they must wish well to our posterity.

Peace with our neighbours, but accursed be the French name—eternal hatred to France: such are our principles.

Natives of Hayti—my happy destiny reserves me to be one day the centinel who is to guard the idol we now sacrifice to. I have grown old fighting for you, sometimes almost alone; and if I have been happy enough to deliver to you the sacred charge confided to me, recollect it is for you, at present, to preserve it. In fighting for your liberty, I have laboured for my own happiness: before it shall be consolidated by laws which shall ensure individual liberty, your chiefs whom I have assembled here, and myself, owe you this last proof of our devotedness.

Generals, and other chiefs, unite with me for the happiness of our country: the day is arrived—the day which will ever perpetuate our glory and our independence.

If there exist among you a lukewarm heart, let him retire, and shudder to pronounce the oath which is to unite us. Let us swear to the whole world, to posterity, to ourselves, to renounce France for ever, and to die, rather than live under its dominion—to fight till the last breath for the independence of our country.

And ye, people, too long unfortunate, witness the oath we now pronounce: recollect that it is upon your constancy and courage I depended when I first entered the career of liberty to fight despotism and tyranny, against which you have been struggling these last fourteen years; remember that I have sacrificed every thing to fly to your defence—parents, children, fortune, and am now only rich, in your liberty—that my name has become a horror to all friends of slavery, or despots; and tyrants only pronounce it, cursing the day that gave me birth; if ever you refuse or receive with murmuring the laws, which the protecting angel that watches over your destinies, shall dictate to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of

## THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION, 1789 TO 1804

an ungrateful people. But away from me this frightful idea: You will be the guardians of the liberty you cherish, the support of the Chief who commands you.

Swear then to live free and independent, and to prefer death to every thing that would lead to replace you under the yoke; swear then to pursue for everlasting, the traitors, and enemies of your independence.

J. J. Dessalines.

Head-quarters, Gonaïves, 1st Jan. 1804,  
1st Year of Independence.

No. XV.

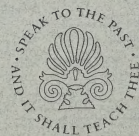






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